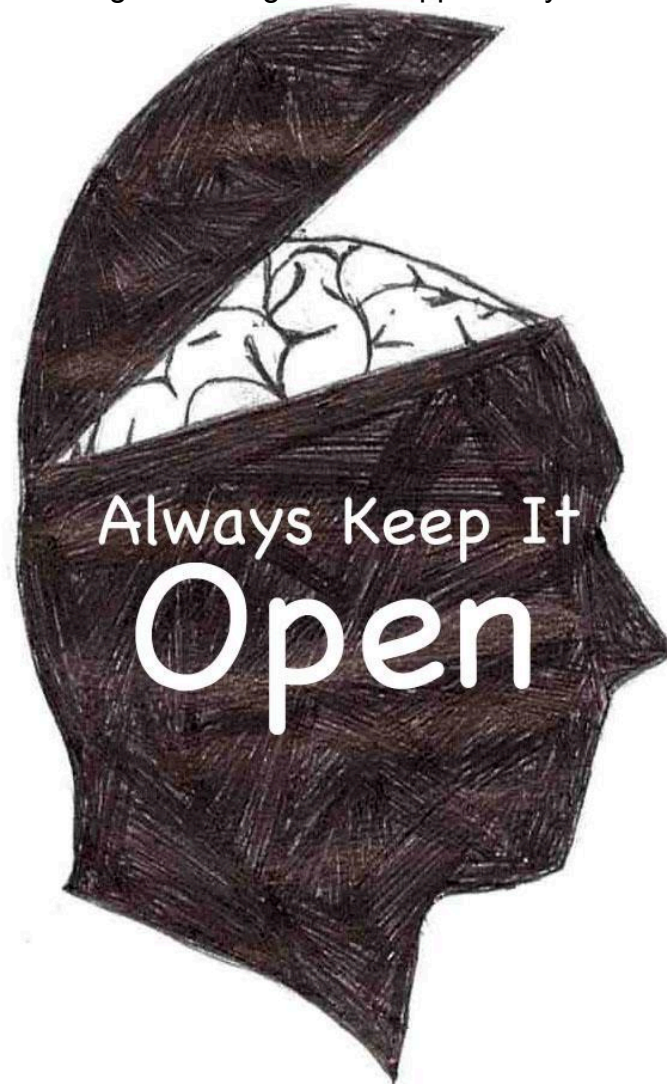


Ellora Whitney--Editorial Cartoon  
Artist Statement

I was asked to complete a visual that went along with a column being written by another student. I made a piece to represent thinking out of the box. Its more of a simplistic piece, but I think it gets the point across quite efficiently. The process didn't have many steps, but I started out with a pencil sketch of a few different side profiles. I used the one I preferred for referencing the final piece. Then, I simply line arted the whole thing. When I finished the drawing, the image was scanned and the words were added in Photoshop. I selected a simple font that stood out and added the word 'open' larger to add more emphasis to it. Overall, creating the piece was very enjoyable, and I'm glad I was given the opportunity to work with this theme.





Ellora Whitney Editorial Cartoon

## The weight of our words

Issues with **opinions** and how we present them in today's society

by Shyloh Gavierez

I think of myself as an opinionated person. If you were to ask me about something, I would give you my honest opinion or the best response that I felt was respectful, because I believe that honesty is important. Without honesty there is no trust, and trust is something that you can't get back once it's lost. But that's just my opinion. There are many issues that we have as a society that we can help change but we just don't. One of those things is our opinions and how we handle them.

Opinions are important. Without them, we wouldn't be able to decide what colors to paint our rooms; we wouldn't be able to decorate something in a way that everyone agreed with. However, sometimes having an opinion can mean that you care. For example, if your best friend asks for your opinion on their outfit, you might tell them that they should change their shoes because it doesn't match their shirt. There is nothing wrong

with a few friendly pointers, however you shouldn't tell someone something that you think if it's to intentionally hurt them. Even though what you say may seem small at first, it could evolve into something bigger. For example, if you were to tell your friend that you think that they

look fat in the shirt that they are wearing, you may think nothing of it at first, but your words could stick with them. After time and time again of you telling them things like this, it isn't long before they develop a lack of confidence, or low self-esteem, which could potentially develop into depression or eating disorders, which leads me to my next point.

There is a phrase that is commonly used that says, "It's not always what you say, sometimes it's the way you say it that matters." One of the things that most people don't take into consideration is the way that we deliver what we have to say, and I believe that respect may play a role as well. In my opinion, and based on what I've observed, when we speak to people that we hold less respect towards, most times we are careless with our words and the tone of which we speak. In this case, the delivery generally consists of a rude or disgusted dynamic. This is where arguments sometimes appear. Most people dislike the disrespect that they feel from the other party's tone or wording of choice. They view it in more of an aggressive manner and instinctively feel that they need to stand their ground and protect themselves. On the other hand, when we speak to someone of higher power that we hold more respect towards, we are more considerate with our tone. The

conversation is airy and lighthearted.

Confidence is a strong feeling and can be uncommon, especially with high school students. But when the confidence that we do have peeks from under the covers, we have a bad habit of letting it go to our heads. Someone with more confidence is less likely to know when to stop being persistent when it comes to their opinion, while someone that carries less confidence with them is more apt to let it go. However, there could be other reasons for this as well. For example: maybe we like the

"It's not always what you say, sometimes it's the way you say it that matters."

attention or we feel like we have something to prove. Maybe you're used to being ignored and enjoy the warm feeling that you get on that rare occasion that someone does acknowledge you. Whatever the case, there is a line, and I believe it is everyone's responsibility to learn where that line lies.

Mr. Jeff Lange, a counselor in Kearney Nebraska who works with Southern

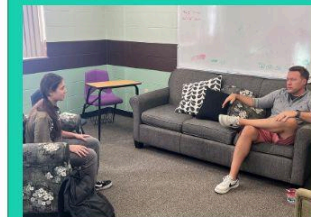
Valley students, said, "Most times when people decide to have an opinion on something, they aren't generally very educated on both sides of the field, so they don't really know enough to be able to not have the opinion that they have." Mr. Lange continued with, "In contrast, people that are fairly well rounded and educated, they don't generally have very strong opinions about things. They tend to think more logically and consider the pros and cons of both sides." Which leads me to persistence.

We all find ourselves stuck scrolling through social media, and in return, we've all seen the arguments that people have. The ones that never seem to end because someone is so determined to be right that they hammer their opinions into the other person. I think that the reason we become so caught up in these arguments; it is because we don't feel like anyone is listening to us.

I think that sometimes we intentionally pick fights or arguments to draw attention to ourselves. The persistence is a result of not feeling heard, or maybe we are subconsciously full of anxiety and fear. I say this because we, as human beings, are not wired to be completely independent and alone. If you isolate a person for an extended period of time, studies have shown that that person will develop qualities such as heart disease,

depression, and poor health overall. So the reason that we are so persistent is to be right is the fear of abandonment from peers. That and being right does a good deal for a person's self-esteem and self-worth. Being right helps a person feel heard and recognized.

The way that you handle your opinion makes a great deal of difference within your day and interactions with peers. There are many different things that can affect this such as the presentation of your opinion and the thought that you put into it. All of it boils down to what you intend to do with your opinion. Are you trying to give suggestions? Are you trying to hurt someone's feelings? Either way, there is a line that you shouldn't cross, and it's your responsibility to figure out where that line is. But that's just my opinion.



Mr. Jeff Lange talks to a student at Southern Valley during the school day.

